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Manifestations of extremism and prejudiced hatred

Summary Situation Report first half of 2024

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1. Information on the development of the extremist scene in the first half of 2024

1.1. Summary

The Czech extremist and xenophobic populist scene has changed significantly. The former ideological dogmas and divisions no longer apply. Previously preferred domestic topics lose their significance and are replaced by topics with international overlap. The Kremlin propaganda has a great influence on shaping narratives. Russian security forces have gained a solid and easily influenced base in the Czech Republic to spread their power. Only anarchists and some neo-Nazi activists remain true to their former ideological foundations.

The anti-systemic movement is marked by the short lifespan of the various entities that have emerged in the social networking environment. At the same time, it is clear that there is a certain "wear and tear" of the xenophobic populist entities, which have been repeating the same claims for a long time and are losing their radicalism. These entities also have come across the fact that more and more politicians and activists outside the traditional extremist and xenophobic populist spectrum start to use nationalism as a tool to win voters or sympathisers.

1.2. Right-wing extremists

During the period under review, isolated unlawful acts by individuals claiming affiliation with the neo-Nazi movement or expressing sympathy for the Nazi regime continued to be reported. Football stadiums continue to be an arena for neo-Nazis and expressions of primitive racism. Some of the slogans brought into the stands by neo-Nazis have spread to fans who are not hooligans or ultras. Typically, these are shouts of 'Jude Slavie' or 'Polish Jews', etc. ¹

Some of the former right-wing extremists have become supporters of the Kremlin regime and have begun to promote "peace" in Ukraine. However, the hard core neo-Nazis still hold to the traditional line, which includes admiration for the Wehrmacht and SS troops in the fight against the Soviet Union.

The Alliance for the Independence of the Czech Republic, which includes the extremist Workers' Social Justice Party and the National Democracy Party, won only 14 910 votes in the European Parliament elections. Both parties did not present themselves in any significant way, as a rule they only participated in the activities of other subjects.

Pavel Matějtný, a neo-Nazi leader of the National Revival party, was detained by police after threatening on social media to join a protest of farmers in front of the Office of the Government with a machine gun. Police officers discovered a functioning and illegally held assault rifle with bullets in his possession. The veteran of the neo-Nazi scene is now in custody facing several criminal charges, not only for the illegal arming, but also for his hateful and racist online posts.

Another neo-Nazi veteran, Filip Vávra, failed in his constitutional complaint against a suspended sentence imposed in connection with the now-defunct National Resistance movement.

¹ These shouts have long been criticized (not only) by Jewish community members.

Karviná District Court rejected the request for conditional release of Vítkov arsonist Jaromír Lukáš.²

The National Headquarters against Terrorism, Extremism and Cybercrime has initiated the prosecution of a person for involvement in the offence of breaching the confidentiality of documents and other papers kept in private in the case of the neo-Nazi website White Media.³

1.3. Manifestations of prejudiced hatred and other statements by xenophobic populist subjects

During the period under review, a series of hate speeches against Ukrainians were reported. Police specialists on extremism warn of an increase in anti-Semitic incidents, especially in the online space. There have been continuous prejudiced hate speeches with anti-Gypsyist, Islamophobic and anti-migrant background.

The dissemination of half-truths or completely fabricated information in the social networking environment helps to create an atmosphere of distrust and hostility. Anti-Ukrainian content is often, regularly and purposefully presented by those spreading Kremlin propaganda. Pro-Russian narratives often determine which group will be most targeted in a given period. The Czech prejudiced hate scene is in this respect easily affected.

The arena of primitive racist attacks continues to be the football environment in the Czech Republic.

The traditional xenophobic-populist entities, which for several years have been recycling the same themes in minor variations, have over time moderated their rhetoric. It also appears that some politicians and entities that did not belong to the prejudiced hate spectrum resort to xenophobic shortcuts. In practice, this was reflected in the results of the European Parliament elections, where the previously dominant Freedom and Direct Democracy movement won only 5.73% of the vote.⁴

Therefore, it is not only politicians from this spectrum who are committing pre-judicial hate speech. One example is the controversial mayor of Řeporyje, Pavel Novotný, who was fined by the District Court for Prague 5 for making offensive anti-Palestinian remarks.

The Municipal Court in Prague imposed a suspended prison sentence of 18 months on Ivana Timová, suspended for a probationary period of 30 months, for several hate crimes. Timova helped her husband, Pavel Rus, to send anti-Semitic hate threats to various institutions in the Czech Republic. Her husband did not make a plea deal and is being prosecuted separately.

The Regional Court in Ostrava cut the fine for Bronislav Makay, a former Bruntál councillor for the Freedom and Direct Democracy movement, who endorsed Russian aggression against

² Lukeš was sentenced to 22 years in prison for the crime of murder. Two of his co-conspirators, Václav Cojocar and Ivo Müller, had previously succeeded in their request for conditional release.

³ Among other things, this website maintained lists of ideological enemies and published their personal information. Persons on these lists were thus deliberately exposed to the risk of harassment or violence by other neo-Nazis..

⁴ Ivan David defended his seat. No one else from the movement's candidate list succeeded in the election.

Ukraine, praised President Putin and recommended that Russia use the hydrogen bomb against the Ukrainians.⁵

1.4. Paramilitary and militia groups

Paramilitary organisations have not developed significant public activities.

Members of the National Militia drew public attention to themselves by participating in the February farmers' protest in Prague. During that event, they stood in front of a podium in the Model 95 military uniforms, which are still used by the Army of the Czech Republic. For unauthorized use of uniforms, Prague police officers reported nine people to the Prague 1 Municipal District Office for possible violations of the Armed Forces Act.

The District Court in Ostrava imposed an eight-month suspended sentence with a two-year probationary period on former National Militia leader Nela Liskova for the crime of inciting hatred against a group of persons or restricting their rights and freedoms. The case refers to hateful and misleading posts published by Liskova on a social media platform. The court also ordered her to delete her profile.

1.5. Anarchist Movement

The anarchist movement continued not to manifest itself significantly. The activities of the anarchist groups were diffuse, focusing on expressions of solidarity with persecuted comrades, with the Palestinians, or other partial protests.

Thus, the only significant event was the May international meeting in Prague entitled "Together against capitalist wars and capitalist peace!"

1.6. Orthodox communists

The orthodox communist spectrum did not manifest itself in any significant way in the period under review. Despite a number of domestic socio-economic phenomena on which orthodox communists could base their manifestations, it was rather foreign political events that resonated within this subculture. In particular, the war in Ukraine. Here, orthodox communists are loudly calling for peace, which in their understanding means ending support for Ukraine so that the Russian Federation can more easily conquer it. What is forgotten in the rhetoric of the orthodox communists is that the aggression was instigated by Russia. Instead, the West, NATO, the European Union or specific states of the transatlantic community and their leaders are described as 'warmongers'.

The Supreme Court rejected an appeal by Josef Skála, convicted with two others for questioning historical facts about the so-called Katyn massacre⁶ in a discussion program on the so-called "Free Radio" to an eight-month suspended sentence for the offense of denying, questioning, approving and justifying genocide.

⁵ The movement has distanced itself from Makay. His sentence for denying, questioning, approving and justifying genocide was reduced from 45,000,- to 39,000,-.

⁶ In 1940, the Soviet NKVD massacred thousands of Polish citizens near the village of Katyn. The communist propaganda blamed the massacre on the Nazis.

The law enforcement authorities continued to deal with several cases of repressive activities of the communist regime before 1989. The Prague 1 District State Prosecutor's Office charged Colonel Jan Muzikář, a senior official of the State Border Guard and Protection Administration, with abuse of official authority for endangering, injuring and killing several persons while attempting to escape across the Czechoslovak border.

1.7. Media spreading prejudiced hatred

Quasi-media news spreading hateful content and openly or covertly feeding the hostile activities of the Russian Federation against the Czech Republic has successfully established itself in the Czech Republic. It generates a wide range of media messages on a long-term, regular and predictable basis. It has found regular subscribers who trust it and refuse to believe information provided by serious media.

Hateful rhetoric against certain groups of the population has become just one component of the mosaic of pro-Russian propaganda. The priority goal is no longer to stir up negative emotions towards migrants, Muslims, Jews, Roma or the LGBT+ community. Through this previously favoured content, the quasi-media scene has already gained supporters and has succeeded in creating or fostering feelings of distrust in the legitimacy of the Czech Republic. At present, it is primarily a matter of communicating narratives in line with the Kremlin's worldview. These media therefore seek to ensure a further shift of values on the part of their consumers. It is no longer just about undermining and weakening confidence in the Czech Republic and provoking antagonisms, but about creating a sense that the Russian Federation is a positive, healthy and progressive alternative.

Thus, we could still see regularly produced anti-migrant, anti-Muslim, anti-Semitic or anti-Ukrainian texts. It is not classical journalism, but more or less automatically produced messages. The persons who create them, yet unmechanical, use certain formulas or functions for each ethnic, religious, sexual or other group. They then complete these with different variables. Next, a triggering incident is needed to activate the function. As a rule, a regular reader only needs to read the headline or the pericope and can figure out the rest of the content on their own. The rest of the message is usually identical for a given social group. If the quasi-media scene starts to exploit the potential of artificial intelligence and automatically generated content, it will be able to increase its production multiple times and overwhelm the media space.

An example of creating hateful content:

Formula: 'Migrants and Muslims are maladjusted, commit crimes and are jihadists'.

Variables: country, type of negative activity

Trigger: text about a real or fictional incident.

Headline: 'Islamist militants have again carried out (negative activity, e.g. assault, theft, rape, etc.) in (Western location). Perex: a more detailed description of the trigger incident.

Residual text: 'The West is weak, it is Islamized. Living in the West is dangerous. The authorities are helpless. Migration to Europe is controlled by hostile elites. Something like this would not happen in Russia. Support pro-Russian politicians.'")

The District Court in Ostrava has imposed a three-year suspended sentence with a two-year probationary period on Radek Velička, editor-in-chief of Patriotic Newspapers, for the crimes of defamation of a nation, race, ethnic or other group of persons and incitement of hatred against a group of persons or restriction of their rights and freedoms. Velička wrote an insulting text on this

server in response to the tragic fire in Bohumín in 2020 about Roma victims. The court also imposed a fine of CZK 30,000 on him. It also closed down the Central Information Agency, which published the Patriotic Newspaper. In its ruling, the Ostrava court considered a suspended sentence against Velička in another case. This is the first verdict against a disinformation media outlet in connection with the publication of hateful content.

1.8. Religiously motivated extremism

In the Czech Republic, the Gaza conflict continued to be a resonant issue in the public sphere. However, there were no direct expressions of support for Hamas or endorsement or advocating of the terrorist attack of 7 October last year by pro-Palestinian activists.

The Regional Court in Ostrava sentenced Dominik Mareček to a three-year sentence suspended for five years for criminal support and promotion of terrorism. In October and November 2023, the young man approved Hamas terrorist actions on social media and called for jihad against the West in a video. Marecek entered into a plea bargain with the prosecutor.

Despite calls by Islamist terrorist organizations to attack Western targets, there have been no indications in the Czech Republic that this call has been heeded in the country.

The dissemination of Islamist propaganda remains a potential risk, particularly in the social media environment.

The current state of affairs, in which part of society no longer trusts both the state and traditional religious institutions, creates a favourable setting for the activities of sects and quasi-religious groups.

1.9. Other relevant events related to extremism and terrorism

The period under review again favoured the so-called anti-system movement. However, it hit its limits in the form of fragmentation, diffuse themes, lack of vision and lack of a more solid structure or organisation. As a rule, the main representatives of this movement have a short political lifespan, quickly become 'stale' and are usually replaced by other figures from the social media environment.

Some of those belonging to this spectrum or involved in the spreading of conspiracies have also had to face responsibility for a wide range of excesses that have been assessed by law enforcement authorities as a crime or misdemeanour.⁷

After Tomáš Čermák, two more people decided to leave the Czech Republic. Tomáš Zítko, who is prosecuted for the crime of spreading a false alarm, was arrested by Slovak police officers and taken into custody.⁸

The anti-system scene continued to operate with Kremlin narratives. This is particularly evident in the case of reproducing the Kremlin's view of the war in Ukraine and adopting negative

⁷ These included, for example, the offences of rioting, threatening an official person, dangerous threats or spread of alarm.

⁸ Activist Ondřej Thor has applied for political asylum in Slovakia .

attitudes towards Ukraine as a state and towards Ukrainians. Russian security forces have long known its potential for their operations on the territory of the Czech Republic

The Russian Federation has continuously conducted a wide range of hybrid operations against the Czech Republic. A number of institutions have been repeatedly targeted by cyber attacks. The Security Information Service said it had uncovered a Russian influence network conducting operations on Czech territory. In response to the disclosure, the Czech government added two individuals and one legal entity to the domestic sanctions list. Czech police arrested a Colombian man suspected of committing an arson attack in a bus terminal in Prague's Klíčov district. The man facing charges of terrorist attack was taken into custody. Investigators work with the version that the attack was ordered by Russian security forces. Security forces of other European countries also work with suspicions of sabotage masterminded from Russia.

The High Court in Prague has upheld a 21-year prison sentence for participation in a terrorist group and for a terrorist attack against Alojz Polák, who became involved in the conflict in Donbas on the side of the self-proclaimed separatist republics. The Regional Court in Hradec Králové imposed a three-year sentence suspended for four years for financing terrorism and a fine of CZK 250,000 on Pavel Fator, who had sent Polák CZK 50,000 in the past.

The pro-Russian motorcycle groups Night Wolves and Brat za Brat made their traditional rides at the turn of April and May.

Police officers continued to register a large number of cases of threats against individuals and institutions or alarmist messages. The high increase occurred after the shooting at the Faculty of Arts at Charles University, which was accompanied by the spread of various disinformation and conspiracies.

The High Court in Prague upheld the decision of the Municipal Court in Prague on the admissibility of the extradition to the US of an Indian citizen who was planning to assassinate a Sikh separatist leader in New York. The Constitutional Court rejected the Indian's complaint against this decision. The man was detained in Prague in June 2023 by police following legal assistance from the US.

At a pro-Palestinian protest in front of the Israeli embassy in Prague, a young man attempted to burn himself to death. Thanks to the intervention of police officers, he was not successful.

Terrorism threat level 1 remained in effect.⁹ However, security measures have been temporarily stepped up for the World Cup and other sporting events in Europe.

⁹ <https://www.mvcr.cz/cthh/clanek/stupne-ohrozeni-terorismem.aspx>.

2. Statistics

2.1. Hate crime in the first half of 2024

Number of offences

Tactical-statistical classification	period 1.1.-30.6.2024	
	registered	clarified
Intentional bodily harm (§ 145 - 146a)	5	3
Violence and threats against a group of citizens and individuals (§ 352)	35	16
Dangerous threats (§ 353)	9	0
Damaging other people´s property (§ 228)	2	0
Disorderly conduct at sports and public events (§ 358)	0	0
Spraying (§ 228/2)	9	1
Defamation of a nation, race, ethnic or other groups (§ 355)	12	6
Incitings the national and racial hatred (§ 356)	28	12
Support and promotion of movement (§§ 403, 404, 405)	0	0
TOTAL	100	38

Number of prosecuted persons

Tactical-statistical classification	period 1.1.-30.6.2024
	number
Intentional bodily harm (§ 145 - 146a)	6
Violence and threats against a group of citizens and individuals (§ 352)	16
Dangerous threats (§ 353)	0
Damaging other people´s property (§ 228)	0
Disorderly conduct at sports and public events (§ 358)	0
Spraying (§ 228/2)	3
Defamation of a nation, race, ethnic or other groups (§ 355)	11
Incitings the national and racial hatred (§ 356)	13
Support and promotion of movement (§§ 403, 404, 405)	0
TOTAL	72

In the first half of 2024, 100 hate crimes were recorded. Of these, 38 were cleared. The most frequent crimes in this period were violence against a group of citizens and violence against an individual with 35 acts.

In the first half of 2024, the Police recorded a total of 72 prosecutions for hate-motivated offences. The most frequent crimes were violence against a group of citizens and violence against an individual with 16 persons.

Number of offences by victim (object of assault)

Group	period 1.1.-30.6.2024
	registered
Jews	25
Roma	8
LGBT+	7
Ukrainians	42

2.2. Hate crime in the first half of 2024 by region

Number of offences

Committed on the territory of the region	period 1.1.-30.6.2024	
	registered	clarified
Capital City of Prague	46	10
Central Bohemia	5	3
South Bohemia	1	1
Plzeň Region	6	4
Ústí Region	3	1
Hradec Králové Region	3	2
South Moravia	6	3
Moravia-Silesia	2	1
Olomouc Region	3	2
Zlín Region	2	0
The Highlands	3	2
Pardubice Region	5	3
Liberec Region	9	3
Karlovy Vary Region	6	3
TOTAL	100	38

Number of prosecuted persons

Committed on the territory of the region	period 1.1.-30.6.2024
	number
Capital City of Prague	16
Central Bohemia	8
South Bohemia	2
Plzeň Region	5
Ústí Region	10
Hradec Králové Region	2
South Moravia	7
Moravia-Silesia	3
Olomouc Region	3
Zlín Region	0

The Highlands	3
Pardubice Region	3
Liberec Region	6
Karlovy Vary Region	4
CZ TOTAL	72

In the first half of 2024, **the biggest number of hate crimes were registered in Prague (46)** and then in the Liberec Region (9). **The biggest number of persons prosecuted** for hate-motivated acts was registered **in Prague (16)**, followed by Ústí nad Labem (10) and Central Bohemia (8).